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Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-12 DPW-01 AID-20 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 /141 W
---------- 078215
R 160415 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0195
INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6396

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS
SUBJECT: MR I CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERIVEW FOR PERIOD
APRIL 8-14, 1973

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM DANANG 15 APR 73 REPEATED FOR
YOUR ACTION AND INFO. QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 403

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, VS
SUBJ: MR I CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERVIEW FOR PERIOD
APRIL 8-14, 1973

BEGIN SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY WENT UP AND DOWN DURING THE
WEEK, BUT GENERALLY AVERAGED OUT AT THE MODERATE LEVEL CHARACTERISTIC
OF RECENT WEEKS. I CORPS COMMANDER, LTG TRUONG, CONTINUED HIS RE-
SHUFFLING OF RVNAF UNITS IN ORDER TO CREATE RESERVE FORCES IN THE
REGION. THE MAJOR EVENT DURING THE PERIOD WAS THE SHOOTING DOWN
OF TWO ICCS HELICOPTERS IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE ON APRIL 7. THE
HELICOPTERS, WHICH HAD STRAYED SOME 41 KILOMETERS OFF COURSE,
WERE FIRED ON BY CUMMUNIST FORCES. ONE HELICOPTER CRASHED,
KILLING THE NINE PERSONS ON BOARD AND THE OTHER HELICOPTER WAS
FORCED TO SET DOWN, WITH THE SURVIVORS EVENTUALLY BEING RETURNED
TO GIO LINH. THE INCIDENT, WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN INADVERTENT,
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CAN ONLY HAVE A LIMITING EFFECT ON FUTURE TRAVEL BY THE ICCS.
ICCS PROCESSING OF INVESTI-

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GATION REQUESTS CONTINUED ITS MEDIOCRE COURSE. ALSO DURING THE WEEK, COMMUNISTS CONTINUED THEIR BUILD- UP OF UNITS AND BASE AREAS IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS OF THE REGION. END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY SITUATION:
A. MILITARY ACTIVITY SEE- SAWED DURING THE WEEK, DROPPING TO THE LOWEST POINT IN THE LAST YEAR ON APRIL 10 WHEN THERE WERE ONLY EIGHT MORTAR ATTACKS BY FIRE IN THE WHOLE REGION, CLIMBING TO 42 INCIDENTS ON THE FOLLOWING DAY AND THEN SETTLING DOWN TO 25 TO 30 INCIDENTS PER DAY AS HAS BEEN CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS. ALSO IN KEEPING WITH THE PAST FEW WEEKS, MOST OF THE FIGHTING TOOK PLACE IN THE 1 ST DIVISION AREA OF OPERATIONS(AO), PARTICULARLY NORTHWEST OF HUE. THE AIRBORNE AO TANGENT TO THE 1 ST DIVISION SAW AN INCREASE IN FIGHTING DURING THE WEEK; STRONG ENEMY PRESSURE FORCED THE AIRBORNE TO ABANDON HOANG HAU OBSERVATION POST, FORMERLY FIRE SUPPORT BASE HELEN (YD 515220) ON APRIL 11. ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION, MILITARY ACTIVITY CONTINUED TO BE SCATTERED WITH CONTACTS OF PRIMARILY LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE BEING REPORTED SOUTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS. THE GVN PURSUED ITS CONSOLIDATION CAMPAIGNS IN CENTRAL QUANG NAM AND TO THE EAST OF QL-1 IN BINH SON, MO DUC AND DUC PHO DISTRICTS OF QUANG NGAI. THE COMMUNISTS, FOR THEIR PART, CONTINUED TO HARASS GVN OUTPOSTS AND UNITS ENGAGED IN CLEARING OPERATIONS. IN SHORT, THE WAR PERCOLATED AT THE COMPANY (AND SOMETIMES BATTALION) LEVEL, GENERATING ENOUGH CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES EACH DAY TO REMIND COUNTRY FOLK THAT THE ARGUMENT IN THOSE CONTESTED PROVINCES IS FAR FROM SETTLED.

BWV I CORPS COMMANDER LOK TRUONG CONTINUES TO DEVOTE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE DEPLOYMENT AND STATE OF READINESS OF HIS FORCES. THE 1 ST RANGER GROUP WAS WITHDRAWN LAST WEEK FROM SOUTHERN QUANG NGAI AND IS NOW POSITIONED SOUTH OF DANANG, WHERE IT SERVES AS STRATEGIC RESERVE FOR SOUTHERN MR I. THE 51 ST REGIMENT, WHICH HAS BEEN OPCON TO THE ARVN 3 RD DIVISION FOR THE PAST NINE MONTHS IN THE QUE SON VALLEY IN QUANG NAM, IS BEING RETURNED TO THE ARVN 1 ST DIVISION AND WILL SOON BE POSITIONED IN PHU LOC DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN THUA THIEN. IT WILL SERVE AS STRATEGIC RESERVE FOR THE NORTHERN TWO PROVINCES OF MR I. CREATION OF THESE TWO REGIMENTAL- SIZE RESERVES PERMITS INCREASED UNIT ROTATION IN AND OUT OF AREAS OF DIRECT BATTLE CONTACT. IT ALSO ALLOWS GENERAL
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TRUONG TO INTENSIFY UNIT RETRAINING, A PROGRAM HE CONSIDERS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE IN PREPARATION FOR A RENEWAL OF LARGE- SCALE HOSTILITIES. CONVERSATIONS WITH GENERAL TRUONG IN RECENT DAYS INDICATE THAT THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT IN HIS MIND THAT A RENEWAL WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

2. ICCS:
A. THE MAJOR EVENT OF THE REPORTING PERIOD IN MR I WAS THE DOWNING OF TWO AIR AMERICA HELICOPTERS CARRYING AN ICCS DELEGATION ON A

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RECCE OF THE PROPOSED POINT OF ENTRY TEAM SITE AT LAO BAO IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE ON APRIL 7. THE LEADING HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN BY A SA-7 MISSLE, KILLING THE NINE PERSONS ABOARD, INCLUDING FOUR ICCS MEMBERS. THE SECOND HELICOPTER SET DOWN ON A ROAD. THE SURVIVING CREW MEMBERS AND PASSENGERS WERE RETURNED TO GIO LINH ON APRIL 10. A SPECIAL REGION I ICCS INVESTIGATION TEAM VISITED THE SITE OF THE INCIDENT APRIL 11 AND APRIL 12, THEN CONVENED AN INVESTIGATORY BOARD APRIL 12 TO CONSIDER THE INCIDENT. THE CHIPDEL BOARD CONCLUDED THAT A NEWLY CONSTRUCTED ROAD, REFERRED TO BY THE PRG AS " ROAD 14", HAD CONFUSED THE PRG LIAISON OFFICER INTO DIRECTING THE HELICOPTERS AWAY FROM ROUTE 9 WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED TO LAO BAO. WHEN THE HELICOPTERS HAD STRAYED SOME 41 KILOMETERS OFF THE PROPOSED COURSE TO THE VICINITY OF YD 1028, PRG FORCES ON THE GROUND STARTED SHOOTING AND THE HELICOPTERS WENT DOWN, THERE IS STILL SPECULATION AS TO WHETHER THE SHOOTING DOWN OF THE CHOPPERS WAS DELIBERATE OR ACCIDENTAL; HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF THE ACCIDENTAL OR DELIBERATE NATURE OF THE TRAGEDY, IT CAN ONLY HAVE A DAMPENING EFFECT ON THE ALREADY LIMITED PERFORMANCE OF THE ICCS. EVEN WITH CLEARANCES AND ASSURANCES FROM THE PRG, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT THE ICCS WILL SOON TRAVEL INTO OR OVER COMMUNIST- HELD TERRITORY--- AT LEAST IN NORTHERN MR I--- WITH A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE.

B. ICCS PERFORMANCE IN PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR INVESTIGATION AND CARRYING OUT THOSE INVESTIGATIONS AUTHORIZED CONTINUES TO BE UNINSPIRING. THE ATTITUDES OF THE POLDELS AND HUNGDELS HAVE NOT CHANGED MARKEDLY; EACH DELEGATION CONTINUED TO RAISE OBJECTIONS AND TECHNICALITIES WHICH HAVE DELAYED TEAM ACTION. THE PRINCIPLE OF AWAITING PRG AS WELL AS GVN LIAISON REPRESENTATION HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY RAISED, PARTICULARLY BY THE HUNGARIANS. IN CONTRAST TO THE GVN AUTHORITIES, HOWEVER, THE PRG HAS ONLY PROVIDED SUCH REPRESENTATION IN A FEW INSTANCES, PRIMARILY IN
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QUANG TRI WHERE DRV/ PRG FORCES HOLD CONSIDERABLE PORTIONS OF THE LOWLAND AREAS. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, GVN AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS AND IN QUANG NGAI, APPEAR TO BE ACQUIRING THE KNACK OF CAREFUL SELECTION AND PREPARATION OF REQUESTS FOR ICCS INVESTIGATION.

3. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY:
COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN MR I CONTINUED ALONG THE DUAL LINES NOTED EARLIER; EXPRESSING INTEREST IN " POLITICAL STRUGGLE" WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PREPARING FOR A RESUMPTION OF MILITARY ACTION. TRADITIONAL COMMUNISTS POLITICAL ACTION--- PROSELYTING, PSYOPS, TAXATION, SELECTIVE ABDUCTION AND ASSASSINATIONS, ORGANIZING/ TRAINING-- CONTINUED UNABATED, AND THERE WAS NO SIGN THAT THE " OTHER SIDE" INTENDS ANYTHING LESS THAN MAXIMUM EFFORT IN THIS FIELD. ARVN INTELLIGENCE REPORTED ON APRIL 13 THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAD COMPLETED CONSTRU-

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TION ON THE KHE SANH AIRFIELD. THERE WAS ALSO A CONTINUAL REPOSITION-
ING OF NVA UNITS AND HEAVY LOGISTIC ACTIVITY IN WESTERN THUA
THIEN, QUANG NAM AND QUANG NGAI PROVINCES. TWO NEW BASE AREAS
WERE BEING ESTABLISHED IN THUA THIEN PROVINCE ALONG THE BORDER
WITH LAOS AND THE ARRIVAL OF MORE TANKS WAS REPORTED IN THE
A SHAU VALLEY. VARIOUS REPORTS HAVE MENTIONED AN OFFENSIVE, THE
DATE FOR WHICH COULD DEPEND ON THE SUCCESS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY.
BROWN UNQUOTE.
BUNKER

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